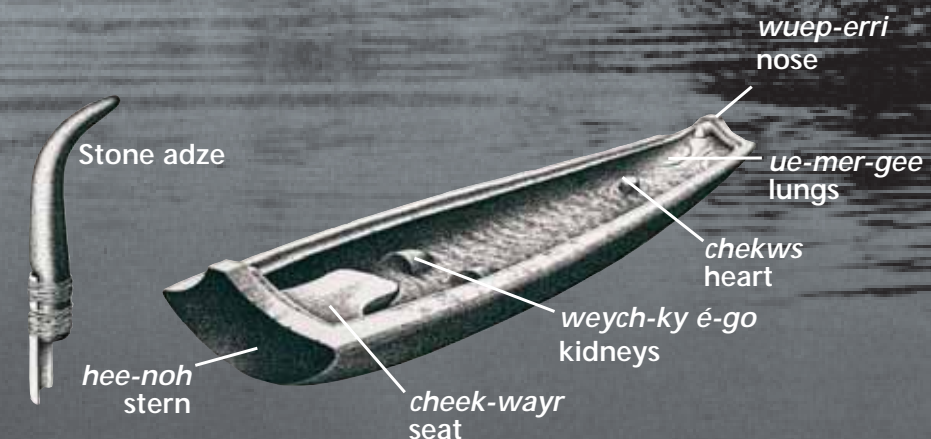


Living Canoe

Yurok elders Dewey George and Jimmy James carved this canoe from a fallen redwood in the 1980s. Their work is part of a tradition passed down through generations. In the past, craftsmen lit slow-burning fires to hollow out the canoe and then used stone adzes to scrape away charred wood.

Today carvers may use traditional methods or combine these methods with the modern technologies of chainsaws, steel adzes, gouges, and electric grinders. The finished canoes are versatile and elegant crafts, used mainly for transportation. Their sturdy construction enables them to carry heavy loads and endure constant beaching along the shore. To withstand the North Coast climate, boat owners keep the wood wet and covered from direct sunlight.



To produce smooth, polished surfaces, traditional canoe builders worked the soft redwood with sandstone and scouring rush. They carved kidneys, heart, lungs, and nose to signify the canoe as a living being.